

BOROUGH OF WILKINSBURG COUNCIL MEETING
Planning Session
May 4, 2011

CALL TO ORDER

President Moore called the meeting to order at approximately 7:10 PM in Council Chambers, second floor of the Municipal Building, 605 Ross Ave., Wilkinsburg, PA.

ROLL CALL

The roll was called to establish a quorum. Present were: Mr. Lefebvre, Ms. Ervin, Ms. Evans, Ms. Trice, Mr. Cohn, Mr. Lewis, Ms. McCarthy-Johnson, Ms. Macklin and President Moore. Also present were Mayor John Thompson, Marla P. Marcinko, Borough Manager and Matt Racunas, Esquire from the Law Offices of Patricia McGrail, L.L.C. and Borough Solicitor. A quorum was established.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Following the pledge of allegiance, President Moore requested a moment of silence be observed to remember all victims of violent crime and members of the community that have passed away.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Peter Pellow – 613 Wallace Ave. – Commented that he has been ticketed for parking in a “No Parking” zone which is posted for same Monday through Friday from 5-7:00 AM. He stated that the sign had been posted for Bell Atlantic workers who parked their trucks there but that is no longer the case. He commented on a petition which was presented to the Chief of Police. He requested that ticketing in this block be suspended until the request for residential parking is considered. Mr. Pellow commented on being mugged and hospitalized one block away from his residence and he does not want to park that far away from his home due to that incident. Mr. Pellow provided his contact information to Council. President Moore advised that she would speak with the Chief of Police.

David Wilson – Eastern Area Pre-Hospital Services – Mr. Wilson provided the monthly report for EAPS. He reported that there was a total of 286 calls in the month of April in Wilkinsburg with 200 patients being transported. The average emergency response time was recorded at 6.1 minutes. Response time for the most life-threatening emergency calls was 5.8 minutes and non-emergency response times were 6.5 minutes. Blood pressure clinics were conducted during for the month of April at the Wallace Avenue Soup Kitchen. There will be a blood pressure screening clinic on Friday May 7, 2011 at the Wallace Avenue Soup Kitchen between 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM. Eastern Area Pre-Hospital Services provides service in six municipalities. Ms. Macklin inquired as to whether EAPS would be occupying an area at the former Wilkinsburg Fire Station

#2 and keeping a truck stationed in Wilkinsburg. Mr. Wilson advised that they are very interested in doing so.

John Ward – 1221 Swissvale Ave. – Commented that there were two more traffic accidents on Hill Avenue at Swissvale Avenue since the last Council meeting. He requested consideration of a one-way westbound restriction for the 1000 block of Hill Ave. Ms. Trice commented that this is a busy intersection and wondered if the State would reconsider installation of a traffic signal at that location. It was suggested that the State be requested to conduct a study and that accident reports be supplied by the Chief of Police.

Terri Supowitz-310 Hay St. – Expressed her concern with the impact of natural gas drilling on water supply and quality. She inquired as to the status of the ordinance to ban natural gas drilling in Wilkinsburg. Mr. Racunas responded that such legislation can be challenged and most likely would not be successfully defended. He advised that the best way to avoid this is to enact restrictive zoning in order to ensure compliance with the Pennsylvania Oil and Gas Act which preempts local laws. He commented on his responsibility to protect Council from potential litigation. Ms. Macklin commented that it was her understanding that Dale Properties had signed leases with residents in the Blackridge community. She further commented that the zoning matter can be explored in the upcoming update of the Borough's zoning ordinance. Mr. Cohn commented that Ben Price had advised that his organization could provide financial support for a defense but the level of that support is limited. He further commented on zoning strategies which can be used to regulate drilling operations. Mr. Lewis advised that there was no further update on water quality testing since the report he provided at the last meeting. Ms. Evans commented that she would support a ban on natural gas drilling in the Borough and expressed concerns with the ability to regulate through zoning given the process which needs to be followed to complete the update of the zoning ordinance.

Eric Belcastro – 343 Waterdam Rd., McDonald, PA 15057 – Commented about drilling and compressor station(s) (emissions) in his neighborhood. He commented about the regulatory issues surrounding drilling and innocent people being affected by the decisions of others. He commented on the need to take stronger action against drilling operations. Mr. Cohn inquired as to whether the Borough can determine who has signed leases with drilling companies.

Robin Clarke – 312 West St. – Spoke in support of a ban on drilling.

Josh Zeksnick 312 West St. – Spoke in support of a ban on drilling.

Eva Goodman – Commented that she also supports a ban on drilling and suggested that regular testing of water quality in source water be conducted at multiple locations in order to establish a baseline on water quality.

REPORT FROM MAYOR JOHN THOMPSON

Mayor Thompson reported:

- There were 40 arrests in the second half of April.
- There was 1 prisoner escape.
- All vehicles are up and running.
- The Citizens' Police Academy is complete. Certificates of Achievement will be presented at the next meeting.

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- He was contacted by representatives from the Week of Hope which has operated in Wilkinsburg for the last three (3) years and will be housed at the High School this year. Approximately 1,500 young people participate in this program and they assist the elderly in performing tasks that they are no longer able to perform. The program runs from June through August.
- He met with the Community Ministerium to discuss recent critical incidents and the need for critical incident counseling. Mayor Thompson suggested that a Critical Event Chaplain is needed who could speak on behalf of a victim's family and in response to certain incidents for the Police Chief and the Mayor.
- MADDADS is celebrating their fifth anniversary at the August Wilson Center on June 25, 2011 from 5:30-9:00 PM. Tickets are \$25.00 in advance and \$30.00 at the door. Mayor Thompson provided an overview of what the MADDADS Program is about for those in the audience that are not familiar with the program.

Ms. Ervin inquired as to whether the escaped prisoner is still at large. Mayor Thompson advised that was the case. Ms. Macklin questioned Mayor Thompson about the status of the water seepage and accumulation in the basement area that the police department occupies. Mayor Thompson responded that he had observed dampness in parts of the basement but did not observe flooding. Ms. Marcinko referred Council to an email that she had issued to Council following an inspection of the area by Mr. Focareta, Roy Clark, DPW Group Leader, Chief Coleman, and herself and the suspected correlation between the water main break on Ross Ave and the water seepage in the basement.

Ms. McCarthy-Johnson questioned the status of Weed and Seed Program funding. Mayor Thompson advised that there are issues surrounding the funding for the Community Policing Liaison position which are being addressed. Ms. Marcinko advised that the current funding for the Weed & Seed positions are provided through federal stimulus funds and not Weed & Seed. She added that the auditing requirements for personnel hours are very stringent under the federal guidelines and that the Borough did not receive any program funding, only funding for staff positions. She expressed confidence in being able to provide the required documentation in order to receive the complete \$40,000 in funding for the CPL position for the current grant year. Mr. Cohn commented that the Governor's budget, if approved, eliminates the entire program. Mayor Thompson advised that the Borough has applied for a grant with the City of Pittsburgh to deal with crime and violence prevention through a faith-based organization. The Mayor further advised that PCCD is seeking funding for the Weed and Seed sites in the amount of \$2,000,000.

President Moore asked Mayor Thompson to provide an overview of the policing segment of the Weed and Seed Program. The Mayor responded by describing the "weeding" portion of the program as the segment in which law enforcement takes and develops police programs and activities to help clean-up parts of the community. The "seeding" segment is the program portion which involves prevention. There have not been program monies available for the past two years. The Citizen's Police Academy and

Citizens' Youth Police Academy are examples of programs that have been continued without the funding support from Weed and Seed.

Ms. Macklin commented that it has been a practice for a consultant and/or a position such as the Weed & Seed Coordinator position to complete detailed timesheets to document how much time is spent on various projects. Ms. Marcinko clarified that the time documentation issue is not related to the Site Coordinator position but with the Community Policing Liaison. Mayor Thompson commented that the documentation which was lacking was not number of hours worked but what portion of the officer's daily hours were specifically related to Weed and Seed projects and a description of those activities. This was not a requirement under grant agreements prior to federal stimulus monies.

REPORT FROM COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Adult Library Report - President Moore reported:

- New computers will be installed in both libraries on May 9, 2011. Eastridge is closed on Mondays so there will be no interruption of service. The main and children's' library will post closing hours.
- The adult summer reading program will run through July 30, 2011. There will be three prizes awarded.
- The annual book sale will be held June 3-11, 2011. There will be a flea market along with the book sale. Books and flea market items will be accepted until May 23, 2011.

President Moore advised that she is the representative for Wilkinsburg for the Hard Head Patrol this summer. The program is sponsored by UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh to identify children without bicycle helmets. Children who are observed wearing helmets will receive a voucher for a free cookie from Giant Eagle. Helmet fittings will be at different locations including Kohl's Dept. Store, Robinson Twp., Monroeville, Route 22, and Stephen Foster Community Center located in Lawrenceville. President Moore requested Council's assistance for a Borough location. Ms. McCarthy-Johnson suggested setting up a table at the upcoming Fun Fest which is the first Saturday in June.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

Capital Planning Committee – Ms. Macklin reported:

- The Committee met last week to focus on capital projects needed throughout the Borough.
- It is proposed that the Borough issue debt to fund the projects and equipment purchases. She will put a report together for Council.
- She is looking for a recommendation from the Manager and Finance Director as to the amount of debt service which can be afforded.

Mr. Lewis questioned the number of years remaining on the current debt and whether the costs for other issuance amounts, other than 4-5 million dollars had been considered. Ms. Macklin responded that there are 7 or 9 years left on the current issue and that costs had been calculated for a 3, 4 and 5 million dollar issue.

Finance Committee – Mr. Cohn reported:

- A list of proposed changes to the current fee structure was presented to Council. At this time, the Committee is not seeking to amend building permit fees as the Committee believed it to be appropriate to wait for the input of the new Director of Code Enforcement. President Moore questioned how non-profits are handled with regard to peddling and soliciting permit fees. The solicitor advised that he would review that matter. Ms. Ervin questioned how residents are notified of soliciting and peddling taking place in the Borough. Ms. Marcinko advised that there is no formal notification system in place.
- Mr. Cohn read aloud each of the fees being proposed and encouraged Council's support for adoption of the new schedule.

Ms. Evans commented on the need to ensure fees are being paid and enforcing the permit process.

- The next meeting date is scheduled for May 19, 2011 at 9:30 AM. This meeting is open to the public.

President Moore questioned whether the meeting dates are ever changed. Mr. Cohn commented that the Committee keeps the standing meeting date and time to avoid additional advertising costs.

Personnel Committee – Ms. Trice reported:

- The Committee met on April 13, 2011 and the following business was conducted:
 - A grievance from the Teamsters was heard.
 - The vacancies in the Finance and Police Departments were discussed.
 - An update was provided on the hiring of Department Directors.
 - There were two vacancies on the Planning Commission which were recommended for appointment. The two new members attended the Commission meeting this week.
- Pay increases for non-union and management Library employees was discussed.
- The employment agreements for management staff will be unchanged through December 31, 2011 and then the Committee will look to standardize the terms and conditions in 2012. One exception to this was the vacation earned for the Administrative Assistant which was increased to two weeks annually.
- The summer laborers positions has been advertised.
- The next meeting will be held on May 11, 2011 at 6:00 PM. This meeting is not open to the public.

Public Safety Committee Report – Mr. Lefebvre reported:

- The Nixle system is back on line.
- The next meeting is scheduled for May 18, 2011 at 5:30 PM.

Ms. McCarthy-Johnson commented on the condition of the roadway on Center Street between South Avenue and Franklin Avenue due to a utility cut made by WPJWA when they repaired a waterline. She also commented on unacceptable restoration of another utility cut on Center Street which was performed by a contractor that the Borough hired to complete storm sewer work.

President Moore inquired about the information that Ms. McCarthy-Johnson forwarded from Kaboom. Ms. McCarthy-Johnson responded that the Wilkinsburg project was not among the finalists. However, she is working with Larry Focareta and Roy Clark on becoming a Play City, USA. The application is due June 1 and there is approximately \$2,000,000 in grant funding which is available for playgrounds for communities with a Play City, USA designation. President Moore questioned the condition of parks and playgrounds. Ms. McCarthy-Johnson responded that Ferguson Playground has a drainage problem. DPW rented a machine from Edgewood and it was believed that the problem was resolved. However, there is now another problem with drainage. Pittsburgh Urban Christian School will be doing some painting in the park. The next meeting of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board is May 19, 2011 at 7 PM. President Moore questioned the condition of Park Place Playground. Ms. Trice advised that she would take a look. Ms. Ervin inquired as to which parks are being locked. Holmes Playground is the only park being locked. Ms. Macklin commented on the need to update the Parks & Recreation and Open Space Plan. Ms. Evans advised that there is no requirement to update the Plan according to a schedule unless applying for funding from DCNR. She commented that the current plan can still be used and contains good recommendations. Ms. McCarthy-Johnson commented that the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board is not recommending that the Plan be updated and that the current plan is still relevant. President Moore inquired about the need for passive parks and the status of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board.

Ms. McCarthy-Johnson announced that the Hamnett Place Community Garden Build Day will be held on May 7, 2011.

Ms. McCarthy-Johnson announced that Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf (WPSD) Commitment to the Community meeting will be held on May 12, 2011. Wilkinsburg will be highlighted and there will be a walking tour of the Hamnett Place neighborhood.

Ms. Ervin questioned how the water is being supplied to the Hamnett Place Community Garden until the rain barrels are installed. Ms. McCarthy-Johnson advised that the water will have to be purchased from WPJWA. Ms. Macklin questioned whether the lot is owned by PHLF and Ms. McCarthy-Johnson replied that it is.

President Moore commented on an "ad" in the St. James Bulletin stating that the apartments at the Crescent were dedicated for parishioners. The other Council members did not indicate having any knowledge of this.

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTIONS

11-037

Declaring blight 7966 Tioga Street, 1515 Wood St. and 1521 Wood Street.

Moved: Mr. Lewis

Seconded by: Ms. McCarthy Johnson

Yes: Ms. Ervin, Ms. Evans, Ms. Trice, Mr. Cohn, Mr. Lewis, Ms. McCarthy-Johnson,
Ms. Macklin, Mr. Lefebvre, President Moore

Motion carried

11-038

Authorizing application for funding for demolition of 7966 Tioga Street, 1515 Wood Street and 1521 Wood Street.

Moved: Mr. Lewis

Seconded by: Mr. Cohn

Yes: Ms. Ervin, Ms. Evans, Ms. Trice, Mr. Cohn, Mr. Lewis, Ms. McCarthy-Johnson,
Ms. Macklin, Mr. Lefebvre, President Moore

Motion carried

Discussion – Community Development Block Grant Program.

Ms. Evans described the decision at hand and information to be considered. She commented that all economic development funding would be impacted if the Borough were to opt-out of the County program. She expressed her support of staying in the program and working more closely with the County to obtain more attention to the Borough's projects. President Moore commented on the need to be more aggressive in promoting projects. Ms. Ervin commented on a summary received from the COG on funding that the Borough has received over the years. Ms. Macklin expressed that she does not feel that the Borough is receiving its fair share of funding from the County and that has been impacted by not having the Oversight Committee. Council needs to be more proactive with political leaders at the County level. Ms. Ervin commented that the Borough did have an Economic Development Committee of Council in the past and questioned whether that Committee should be reestablished.

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Mayor Thompson commented that the mirror at South Avenue and Ardmore Blvd is dangling by the frame.

Ms. Marcinko questioned Council's intention with regard to opting out of the County's CDBG program. It was the consensus of Council to remain in the County's program. Ms. Evans commented that we should still try to obtain the information from the County as to what amount of their total funding can be attributed to Wilkinsburg. She further commented that Council should work to ensure that a good percentage of the funding is coming to Wilkinsburg.

Being no further business, on motion by Mr. Cohn, second by Mr. Lewis, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:42 PM.

Eugenia Moore, Council President